Creating Visual Experiences

How visual experiences inspire interest, drive demand, and create a path to purchase in today’s digital economies
“Visual Experiences” tie together the waking moments of our lives. From the minute we rise in the morning to when we lay our heads at night, we ingest visual information at an incredible rate. Studies estimate that we take in over 34GB of information daily, or enough to overwhelm the laptop you’re probably reading this on.

And that number is only growing.

The explosion of media and brand content has a direct connection to the smartphones in our pockets. Access at all times has democratized information and exposed us to a competitive world of available options.

Within today’s digital age, there are new demands on sellers. Instead of physical experiences, consumers prefer virtual ones. We consume through a screen, thus as sellers, we must think differently about how we present our products.

Enter the “Visual Buying Experience.”
I'm in the market for a new SUV. I need something that can withstand the beating my kids and their friends will put on it. Something that will survive taking our dog for drives. And something that I will still be able to enjoy on my daily commute.

I remember car shopping with my parents when I was young. It was a tedious process of looking in the paper for car ads, going from dealership to dealership, seeing what was on the lot, and negotiating with the salespeople.

**In short.... it was awful.**

But thankfully, a lot’s changed since then.

For my last car purchase I did 80% of my research online. I was able to see inventory at each location and get information on available models, but I still had to go to the dealer to view the options I wanted and get a feel for the car. That was five years ago.

This time around the buying experience is **even better.** So much better. From the comfort of my couch, I begin the search for my new car. But unlike last time, I don’t experience the same presentation of 4 wheels and 5-8 seats in a cold, transactional information-based site that I’d known before.
Instead I was immersed in a visually rich, inspirational experience that had me envisioning a family ski trip, weekends on the beach, and long drives through the country. I could picture the easiest grocery pickup ever, complete with an organizer keeping all our produce safe and stowed away. I began to see myself driving into work, wind in my hair, shades on, enjoying the sunshine through a double sunroof. I was buying the visual experience these automakers were offering. At each step in their well-crafted buyer journey they presented more engaging content and ways to experience their product. I was able to do digitally what I used to do physically.

I took a “walk” around the car and kicked the digital tires to see all the angles of this model from the outside, not just the best ones they took pictures of. I was able to look around the back and see if there’s room for our beach chairs. I was able to see what it looks like with the third row up. I was able to “sit” in the back and see if there will be enough leg room when I pick up the boys for golf on Saturdays. And I was able to sit in the driver seat and take a digital test drive.

This entire experience is best described as a “Visual Buyer’s Journey.” Brands that have recognized the need to offer the digital version of what we used to do in the brick & mortar days are focused on creating impactful Visual Experiences like this one. This is because the convenience of online shopping will almost always win with the consumer. But, the experiences digital offers has to meet the high expectations of these consumers. Automakers were early to recognize this as they sell a high dollar product where the purchase decision relies on emotion as much as it does rationale.

If you’re not sure how Visual Experiences can impact your business, read on to learn more.
VISUAL EXPERIENCES
UNDERSTANDING VISUAL'S ROLE
Visual Experiences can take on many forms, but each will likely begin with one of the following ways in which products are visually presented to us. From passive, static imagery to highly configurable interactive product experiences, a buyer will often travel across this landscape.

THE VISUAL LANDSCAPE

Product Photography
Photorealistic Imagery (CGI)
3D Product Visualization
3D Visual Product Configuration
3D Visual Configuration + Integrations

Think of creating visual experiences like hosting a dinner party. Guests are coming and the expectation is to be served something. You’ll consider what meal you want to serve, collect the ingredients, follow a recipe, and bake a delicious meal. But that’s only part of the experience. There’s the tidying up before, selecting what music will be playing, setting the table, lighting candles, etc.

We do all this because we want to provide an exceptional experience for our guests. After all, we could have just heated up some leftovers and served them on paper plates. Easy and low maintenance, but not likely to get us return guests.

We need to think about the experience we welcome our potential customers to in the same way we would strive to impress dinner guests. In today’s digital world, this means we need to focus on how we’re leveraging product visualization across the visual landscape to ensure we’re meeting the high expectations of our prospects.

To learn more about the Visual Landscape, download the ULTIMATE GUIDE TO VISUAL COMMERCE.
As we’ve evolved into web-first shoppers, so has our demand for visual experiences. A photograph would have sufficed in the past, but the consumer base is now more sophisticated, and thus, has higher expectations.

Static visual experiences include any 2D still images either captured in traditional photography or through CGI (Computer Generated Imagery).

Traditional photography is great when you’re on location, when you want people in the scene, or you are capturing an event.

CGI is better for instances when you have digital models of a product and would like to benefit from the ability to easily update and edit the image over time. These products can be siloed to focus just on the product or it can be placed into a scene. When executed well, CGI can be incredibly difficult to distinguish from the real thing.
As we’ve evolved into web-first shoppers, so has the demand for visual experiences. When before a simple product photography would suffice, the consumer base is now more sophisticated, and thus, more demanding.

“Motion” based imagery shows a captured sequence of a product in action, usually through videos or product GIFs. Presenting products in motion could be as simple as a brief demo reel, but also include more elaborate productions with full studio quality. Motion is great for creating inspiration as well as answering more of the buyer’s expectations than merely showing a static picture of it.
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Interactive product experiences include the best of both. With 3D interactive product presentation, the buyer is now in the driver seat. Empowered to control their own process, the buyer can navigate a journey that feels personal to them. No longer constrained by how static images and video control their viewing, the buyer has the ability to view and configure a product to best meet their expectations. This becomes possible through platforms like ATLATL Visual, which leverages a company’s product models to create buyer-centric interfaces for greater commerce experiences.

This important evolution in product presentation enables companies to offer an experience that compliments what used to occur in-store. Through digital product visualization and configuration, buyers can now harness the convenience of the web without sacrificing confidence in their purchase.
What we used to do: If you wanted a new sectional, you’d visit popular retailers like Pottery Barn, Ethan Allen, Crate & Barrel, among others. You’d drive to the mall, walk their stores, sit on whatever pieces they had on the floor, and you’d do your best to imagine what the options you actually want would look like. Then you’d try even harder to imagine what all of this would look like in your own home.

Today: Today’s experience is much different thanks to those like Wayfair pushing the envelope. A digital native, they’ve helped move the industry to offer “a better way.” Now I sit in my living room, on my current couch, with my feet up and a drink at my side, and I can shop almost any store. Through my laptop and my smartphone I can see and visualize the exact sectionals I want to buy, even viewing them in Augmented Reality to get a full view of my own space as it could be. This expectation meeting experience is what buyers are craving because it gives them confidence in their purchase.
Recreational Vehicles | ATLATL Bike

Bikes, mopeds, ATV’s, motorcycles, scooters, and similar categories all have something in common besides wheels. Each is made for a very practical purpose, transporting you from A to B. Yet the purchase of each is highly emotional, and thus, is highly impacted by the buyer’s experience. These purchases often stretch beyond transportation and into statements like “does this make me feel adventurous” or “does this make me feel cool.” Matching aspirations like this means creating inspirational ways to help the buyer journey towards their purchase on their terms. And this journey is very visual. The exact colors, personalized touches, minor details... all of these elements become critical to the decision of the buyer.

This is why we’re partnering with a motorcycle manufacturer to build the next generation of their customer experience. Complimenting their incredible photography, customers will soon be able to view, select, and build the bike of their dream in a 3D experience. Raising the bar, this visual journey will help accelerate their sales process and improve buyer satisfaction.
Sunglasses are an incredibly functional apparel item, yet they always are one of the most fashionably conscious purchases we make. Seldom do people buy sunglasses purely on function because they are so central to our appearance. I mean, they’re literally on our faces. And thus we often select a pair after an awkward try on where we’re looking at whatever may be available in front of us, looking through the sunglasses and trying to see how we look, which never works great because it’s always too dark to really tell. (Or maybe that’s just me?)

Nonetheless sunglass buying, like everything else, has shifted online. But with a digital purchase creeps even more doubt. Until now. Brands are beginning to leverage technology to solve for this with visual experiences. Sunski is an excellent example of a brand who created a unique way to build buyer confidence through visual experience.

When visiting their site you have the option to record a video snippet of yourself. Using this, Sunski will superimpose the pair of sunglasses you’ve selected to your face, giving you a perspective you’ve never experienced before. For the first time, a brand is letting you see yourself how others will see you with these new sunglasses. It’s a fun and useful tool that eases buyers’ concerns.
VISUAL EXPERIENCES

WHY THEY ARE SO IMPACTFUL
WHY VISUAL

VISUAL IS THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE SENSES

- 60,000X faster processing of information through sight
- 90% of the information we capture is through what we see
- 65% learn most effectively through visual cues
- 43% increase in conversion through visual cues
- 323% better performance when people can follow visual cues

EXPERIENCES PAY

- 86% of consumers will pay more for a brand offering a better experience
- 80% of consumers will pay more for personalized experience

WINNING COMBINATION

- 40% increase in conversion rate with Visual experiences
- 24% increase in sales efficiency
- 30% reduction in sales costs
People follow and understand visual cues much faster. We process information best visually, which means we experience products best visually. To gain understanding of what we’re buying to be confident in what we’re purchasing.

**Visualization accomplishes this, and it does so quickly.**

A visual experience is much faster as you experience it than the thousand words it may take to describe it.

“This is so much easier than it used to be.”
When buyers are able to see exactly what it is they’re buying, they are a confident buyer.

A confident buyer is more likely to buy.

But they’re also far less likely to return the product because the visual buying experience has already enabled them to address their questions.

Order errors and returns can be a massive but measurable drain on your business. What’s even harder to measure is the impact of the buyer who doesn’t have the confidence to buy yet because of your current buying experience.

“Finally, I’m no longer guessing before I buy.”
Saving your customers time makes them happy. Saving your company time makes you money.

Accurate visual product experiences lead to confident buyers. Confident buyers lead to less revenue lost to returns. But time and money aren’t the only benefits behind great visual experiences.

These also reflect your product quality and your brand.

And as such this gives you an opportunity to make an impression and gain valuable word of mouth press from satisfied customers.

“This is how it should be.”
I don’t need to write about how much our lives have changed since eCommerce became the preferred method of shopping in our lives. But we all need to learn from the continuing impacts its rise has created. One of the biggest effects we’ve seen is the continued demise of brick and mortar retail operations.

Studies have shown that with each 1% increase in online penetration, 8-8,500 stores will need to close. And there are no signs that online shopping will slow. In fact, the average household spent $5,200 online last year, which is up 50% from just five years earlier.

With trends like this, it’s no surprise that 9,200 stores closed last year, and that experts predict upwards of 75,000 more stores will close by 2026.
This mass exodus away from retail is a transformational shift in our economy that will have to be addressed by companies of all categories. The question that remains is who will be amongst the group that embraces change and begins to offer new, digitally based, visual product experiences, and survives this shift.

But the truth is, many will not survive. As evidenced by the continued growth in store closings, what started with eCommerce will continue. But there is a new hope for those still seeking a way to thrive in this new digital world:

**vCommerce**

eCommerce simply reflects the capability to sell products online. **vCommerce, or Visual Commerce, references a visually based commerce strategy that applies to the digital world our consumers exist in.**

Brands that embrace vCommerce practices and platforms will thrive. The transformation and shift that began with eCommerce will end as companies embrace visual selling strategies. Marking a significant milestone in consumer behavior, we are embarking on a new era, a **Visual Era in consumerism.**

#REXIT
What does the failure of retail have to do with B2B?

**EVERYTHING**

Here’s why:

1 | The same customers who are B2B buyers are everyday consumers as well. They will continue to expect similar experiences in their B2B lives as they have in their consumer lives.

2 | Companies feeling the impact of the retail decline are suffering from the cost of doing nothing. B2B companies who don’t take action now will suffer the same fate.

3 | B2B buying isn’t shifting, it has already shifted. There’s been an evolution in how we approach buying and it has everything to do with digital.

4 | Visual Commerce is the answer digital has been searching for. Complex products have always presented a challenge to online sales, until now. The ability to see and configure products online opens a new wave in potential sales opportunities.
In the analog economy, complex product purchases would require upwards of 17 visits to a brick and mortar retail location before making a purchase. Customers were forced to visit a physical location every time they wanted to investigate a product. Every question, every piece of information, and all product collateral was gate kept behind the doors of a store and its salespeople. This required frequent visits and an elongated sales process.
With the birth of the web came a new access point. Digital opened a world where shoppers were freed from the constraints of location and could now source information at their convenience. This transformed the buyer’s journey as upwards of **70% of the sales process quickly shifted towards pre-store activity**. Yet buyers were still required to visit the store to complete product configurations or view more detailed options as they completed their purchase.
vCommerce has created a new way of thinking about the buyer’s journey. 3D interactive product visualization have solved for this final piece in the digital buyer’s puzzle. Extending a digital environment’s ability not only to offer information, but to take action on it through intuitively built user interfaces that enable product configuration and online purchasing.
A new three-step buyer's journey has emerged to encompass this simplified yet impactful buying experience powered by visualization. Going forward, buyers will search and select product from the convenience of their chosen device. From there, they will be presented with ways to make the product their own through personalization or customization. They can then complete their purchase through digital commerce extensions, closing the loop on modern purchase pathways.
There’s no doubt that how we search for products has changed with over 90% of buyers beginning their purchase journey online. Here are two important trends to pay attention to:

**Visual Search** references a method of online search where an image, as opposed to a text based query, generates the results. Images make up over 20% of Google’s queries. Companies that enable their website to support visual search will increase digital commerce revenue by 30%.

**Social Commerce** revenue growth is expected to double in the next four years. This is a natural evolution that has been fueled by visual experiences. Platforms like Instagram and Pinterest began as ways to share visual information, but have quickly evolved as ways to engage in visually based commerce. In fact, 60% of users first hear about products on Instagram. On Pinterest, 90% of users leverage the platform when making purchase decisions.
More than half of your customers will expect personalization as a standard part of their experience as it helps them feel recognized as an individual. There are many ways to add personalized elements into your experience, but the most impactful is to allow your buyer to control their product purchase process.

Through a visual platform, a brand can offer its buyers ways to experience their products through virtual experiences, where on screen, their product can come to life for a richer interaction.

Rather than just viewing static imagery and video, the buyer can build their own narrative as they engage with a 3D model, or a digital twin, of the product they’re considering.
Because of 3D visual product experiences powering the buying process, there is now an opportunity to extend commerce beyond what we know as eCommerce today.

**vCommerce** allows for customizable products to be viewed, configured, and considered with accurate expectations of what the customer would actually receive.

This enables a much wider range of commerce through intuitively designed interfaces built to guide the user towards their desired product.

**Completing The Commerce Experience**
Visual experiences are faster than traditional methods of presenting products. This means shorter sales cycles, faster paths to purchase, and greater opportunities at revenue.

**RETURN RATES**

With 3D interactive product presentation, consumers can visually experience a product on-screen and through AR. This helps them answer any product questions they may have just as if it were in front of them. The result? Fewer returns thanks to greater awareness during the purchasing process. This is an incredible cost savings.

**COST RECOVERY**

The cost of supporting one retail location can be enormous. A fraction of this cost can be devoted towards new technologies like 3D Visual and within no time, you will see exponentially greater returns. Leveraging new innovations in place of lagging performers is the smartest way to gain efficiency in your operation.

**INCREASED SALES**

The improved buying experience through 3D Visual leads to a more satisfied customer. More satisfied customers buy more. They also are more willing to share their experience with others.

Most marketing organizations face a tough challenge. Attributing marketing dollars towards revenue activity is always an important task in today’s data driven environments. But perhaps the biggest obstacle that will have to be overcome is that most traditional MarTech stacks were not designed for the visual era.

This is where **3D interactive technology** can help create visual experiences at scale. Empowering consumers to self-select and configure to their own choosing creates several measurable benefits as well as others that are key influencers towards purchase.

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VISUAL EXPERIENCES WHERE TO FOCUS
WHERE TO FOCUS VISUAL EXPERIENCES

As the buyer gets serious, 3D Visual not only allows them to select and configure elements and options, but transfer these seamlessly to a commerce experience. Transacting online through a cart or by sharing with a dealer/distributor in your network extends the value of the platform by capturing the data around their activity and turning that into action towards the purchase.

AWARENESS

As you look to create inspiration for your products, one of the best ways to drive interest is to present the product with the options that speak to your targeted audience. To do this in traditional photography, you’ll literally have to take multiple photos of multiple models of product. But with 3D Visual, you can create each and every combination of product options to have at your disposal.

Have a market that prefers a darker color, show it. If you know a market needs a certain option feature, show it. This ability creates greater likeliness that your Awareness efforts will take effect.

CONSIDERATION

Once you capture their attention, now they’ll want the playground to play in. This is where 3D Visual helps you empower your buyer to play and interact with your product. Let them explore options, build their own version, and even share their experience with others.

SELECTION

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Visual experiences have a place in each phase of your buyer’s journey.
VISUAL EXPERIENCES
HOW TO GET STARTED
Is your organization ready to tackle a Visual Buying Experience?

Where do you stand today?
What more do you need to do?

Most companies think that adding 3D Visual to their current site will be a monumental undertaking. But the truth is, it doesn’t have to be.

We have designed our platform to carry the burden for you. We’re here to help get you rolling towards better buying experiences!
Here’s a helpful checklist of things to consider as you seek to create visual experiences.

To learn more about “Above the Line” vs “Below the Line” click here

**ABOVE THE LINE**

- **Buyer Awareness**
  - Buyer personas identified
  - You’re leveraging social networks to reach your buyers
  - Your social content presents your product visually
  - Your efforts drive contacts towards your web experience

- **Sales Ready Website**
  - Buyer persona journeys have been mapped
  - Web pages reflect the ways the buyer considers your product
  - You’ve created space for visual experiences across your website
  - You have a plan to present visual content

**BETWEEN THE LINE**

- **Data Planning**
  - You have a database to capture and gain insights from
  - A CRM system can capture and track these relationships with contacts

- **Product Readiness**
  - You have digital twins of your products
  - 3D models of your products are easiest to convert
  - These may come from a CAD style design program

- **Commerce**
  - You have a plan to connect visual experiences to a purchase path
  - This may include integrations to COMMERCE or CPQ platforms
Don’t make this mistake: Your team makes the leap and invests in a great new way to sell your products. You work with an agency to design a beautiful interface and construct some sort of backend. They complete the project and you’re off and running. **Problem is, you’re on your own.** The “project” is over and you’re stuck with something that you can’t scale.

Instead, make sure you investigate **Platforms** that specialize in offering visual solutions to meet your evolving business needs. A platform provider will **continue to work with you to help add new product lines, edit your current offering, and streamline your integrations.** They’ll do all this while continually working to improve their platform with **new features that make your offering even better.**
VISUAL EXPERIENCES
HOW WE CAN HELP
GET TO KNOW ATLATL VISUAL

We will work with you to understand the exact needs of your buyers and create an experience that speaks to them.

THE ATLATL VISUAL PLATFORM

1. Your Website
2. Existing Product Navigation
3. Converted Configuration Ready Product Models
4. Ability To Continue Experience In Cart Or To A Dealer
5. Configurable Options Available
6. Ability To View In AR
7. Ability To Navigate To Other Options
Our customers have entrusted us to power the most critical element of their buyer’s experience. The final decision to purchase or not often revolves around having all of their expectations met.

With 3-dimensional, interactive, visual product presentation there’s simply no better way to sell products in the digital age. And our customers have agreed.

But it’s not just their buyers’ experience they like, it’s their own. They appreciate our partnership, our ease of use, and ease of implementation.

“Atlatl makes the best visual configurator out there.”

4.3 ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
CREATE LEVERAGE

The ATLATL team works with you to leverage your 3D assets, bringing your products to life on-screen for more enjoyable buying experiences.

LAUNCH

The ATLATL team helps you implement and integrate to ensure a successful launch of your new visual platform. You’re never on your own with ATLATL.

HIT YOUR TARGETS

With the ATLATL platform in place, your team will start hitting your revenue targets faster. Average sale values will increase as return rates drop. All thanks to VISUAL.
Closing Thoughts…

Visual Experiences are the way people want to buy. They remove friction, speed the process, and better meet their expectations. We are visual creatures and we process information visually. Buying products through visually interactive experiences is the digital age’s best answer to the brick and mortar experiences of the past.

If you make a physical product, a visual platform should be the next thing you invest in to ensure you’re providing your customers the preferred way to buy.

Let us know how we can help you.
The Best Ways to Continue your Exploration into Visual Commerce

1. Read more from others [here](#)
2. Explore more of our helpful resources [here](#)
3. Talk with one of our Visual Strategists [here](#)